Amateur Radio Newsline Report 1548 - April 13, 2007

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1548 with a
release date of Friday, April 13th, 2007 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. A space adventurer is
on the air from the International Space Station
and we have the audio. Also, President Bush
honors a California ham for his volunteerism and
the FCC issues a possible record fine is issued
for selling illegal C-B gear. Find out the
details on Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1548 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: SPACE TOURIST ON THE AIR

It cost him an estimated 20 million dollars to
get there, but Space tourist Charles Simonyi,
KE7KDP, is on the air from the International
Space Station Amateur Radio Newsline producer
Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is in our Los Angeles
newsroom with the audio of some of his first contacts:

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Simonyi: "November Alpha One Sierra Sierra. CQ, CQ, CQ."

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As we go to air space tourist Charles Simonyi,
KE7KDP, has only been on the International Space
Station for a few days. No matter because he
seems to have really taken to the idea of talking
to people back on mother Earth using Amateur
Radio and does it like a pro. Take a listen:

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Simonyi: "Kilo Echo 7 please repeater your
callsignKilo Echo 7 Mike Henry George this is
Charles. I hear you loud and clear. And a big
73 for you. Thanks for the contact. QRZ.

The Whiskey 6 stand-by. Whiskey 6 Mike Echo
Uniform, my name is Charles and I hear you loud and clear. 73 to you. "

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One of the first stations contacted by KE7KDP was
Scott Avery, WA6LIE, in Salinas, California.
Avery had his recorder running as KE7KDP sent a
message of thank you to the ham community which

worked with him to get him licensed in time for the flight:

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Simonyi: "Well I just want to congratulate the
(ham radio) community for the great job that they
are doing in performing their charter. As we
learned about it (in training) and to thank
everybody who helped me to get into the community
and helping me along. It is not easy for me and
I do the best that I can. So, thanks a lot guys,
and I hope I can talk to as many people as possible. Over."

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We also got the chance to ask Avery what it was
like to talk to Charles Simonyi and relay his message to the ham radio world:

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Avery: "Being one of the first to talk to
Charles on the International Space Station was
definitely an honor and a surprise. I feel very
lucky to have had this opportunity and I hope
that others enjoy their contacts as much as I
did. Its pretty awesome and a once in a lifetime experience."

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After they chatted for about a minute, KE7KDP
said 73 to Avery and went on to work station
after station, almost as if he was on a
DX-pedition. In some ways he was and Avery kept
tape rolling until the I-S-S faded from view:

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Audio of KE7KDP making rapid-fire contacts. Hear
it in the MP3 version of this newscast downloadable from www.arnewsline.org

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KE7KDP has since gone on to make numerous of
random QSO's using the call sign NA1SS. Most U-S
hams report that they heard him on 145.8 MHz and
made contact by calling him split frequency on
the 144.490 I-S-S uplink channel.   The
frequencies used in other parts of the world
vary. Most of the information you need and a
blog by those who have made contact with Simonyi
can be found on-line at www.issfanclub.com

Charles Simonyi will be on board the I-S-S until
April 20th. Thats when he returns to Earth with
Expedition 14 crew members of Michael

Lopez-Alegria, KE5GTK, and Mikhail Tyurin, RZ3FT, both of whom who have been in space since last September. So until then, keep an ear open for Charles Simonyi, KE7KDP, operating mainly as NA1SS from space.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF. I'm at the studio in Los Angeles.

Jim
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You can follow KE7KDP's space and ham radio adventure on-line at www.charlesinspace.com (ARNewsline with audio supplied by WA6LIE)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED TO VICTORVILLE CA HAM

President Bush has recognized a Victorville, California ham with a volunteer award. Randy Hatfield, AG6RH, has been presented the Presidents Volunteer Service Award in recognition of his helping 350 others obtain their amateur radio licenses. Amateur Radio Newsline's Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR, has more:

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The award presentation to Randy Hatfield, AG6RH by President Bush took place on Wednesday, April 4th. This, during a stopover of Air Force One at the Southern California Logistics Airport.

According to a White House press release, in addition to his work in training new radio amateurs, Hatfield was also honored for more than 500 hours he has volunteered to the city of Victorville's Emergency Communications Service.

Randy Hatfield is with the City of Victorville Community Emergency Response Team and the local Emergency Communication Service. He began volunteering with the Victorville team about 18 months. His group trains volunteers in basic response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster preparedness and emergency communications.

In accepting the award Hatfield noted that he became involved in Amateur Radio and the Community Emergency Response Team because he knows the day will come where volunteers will be needed to support the infrastructure of every city that might be affected. AG6RH says -- and we quote: "If you dont have communications, you cant recover."

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Jeff Reinhardt, AA6JR.

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Hatfield was nominated for the award by his co-workers. Since March 2002, President Bush has met with almost 600 individuals around the country to present similar accolades. (CGC, San Bernardino News, others)

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RESCUE RADIO: HT SAVES PAIR STRANDED ON N.M. MOUNTAIN

An interesting story with a ham radio twist out of New Mexico. Thats where two men from the Gulf Coast found themselves stuck overnight on March 15th in the mountains just East of Albuquerque.

According to news reports, 19 year old Nathan Gerber and his companion Hunter Welch, 21 of Corpus Christi, Texas were visiting the area, The two were attempting to descend from Sandia Crest but found themselves stuck on a sheer rock face, unable to proceed down and confronted with loose rock that stopped them from retracing their steps back up.

The two were not properly dressed for the overnight temperatures that occur at 10,000-plus feet in mid March. The only thing that they had going for them was a two-way radio. And according to the news report it was that radio that likely saved their life.

It seems a local radio amateur heard their pleas for assistance. He in turn alerted the state police which dispatched a rescue crew.

The two men were plucked from the mountain face at about 4 a.m. on the 16th . Officials say they were exhausted but otherwise okay.

No information was provided in the K-Oh-B news story as to who the ham was that picked up the rescue call was or what type of radio Gerber and Welch were carrying. Neither of their name appear in the FCC database as being licensed radio amateurs. (KOB TV News, others)

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RADIO LAW: HFA FILES PETITION FOR RECONSIDERATION ON ANTENNA RIGHTS

A small group of antenna rights activists has petitioned the FCC to reconsider the agency's denial of their request to override deed

restrictions that preclude Amateur Radio antennas.

Hams for Action filed its initial request back on July 31st of 2006. In it, the group urged the FCC to establish reasonable regulation of outdoor ham antennas by Homeowners' Associations and other private land use regulators. This, in place of the total antenna bans which currently prevail in many neighborhoods across the United States.

Currently the FCC has PRB-1 which precludes states, cities and other local governments from banning ham radio antenna installations. It has no such rule governing land use agreements which the agency considers to be a private matter between buyers and sellers.

The Hams for Action request was turned down by the FCC this past February 28th. The group has now filed its Petition For Reconsideration which is in effect, an appeal for the 5 FCC Commissioners to review and reverse the decision of the Commission's staff.

More is on-line at the Hams for Action website. Its in cyberspace at www.hamsforaction.net (Press release)

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Break 1

This week from Auckland, New Zealand and from the United States of America, we are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the W2CNY repeater of the Central New York Amateur Radio Fellowship serving Syracuse, New York.

(5 sec pause here)

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ENFORCEMENT: OHIO FIRM FINED $150,000 FOR ALLEGEDLY MARKETING ILLEGAL 11 METER GRER

Possibly one of the largest fines ever for selling non certified C-B sets under the guise of it being ham radio gear has been issued to Ramko Distributors Inc. of Toledo, Ohio. Its a massive $150,000 Notice of Apparent Liability for alleged marketing of 17 models of non-certified radio transceivers that the FCC say are all capable of easily being converted to the 11 meter band. Amateur Radio Newsline's Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, has the details

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Back on November 26, 2001, the FCC Enforcement Bureau's Dallas, Texas Field Office issued a

Citation to Ramko Distributors for allegedly marketing 41 models of non-certified "10-meter" CB radio transceivers. The Dallas Office noted that the Commission had evaluated devices similar to those in the past and had concluded that the devices marketed by Ramko were not only Amateur Radio transceiver but could easily be altered for use as C-B devices. The Dallas Office further noted that the Commission has concluded that such devices fall within the definition of a C-B transmitter and therefore cannot legally be imported or marketed in the United States.

The Citation warned Ramko of the possible consequences of continued marketing of these devices in violation of the rules, including monetary forfeitures and criminal sanctions.

On November 30, 2001, Ramko submitted a follow-up letter to the Citation. The company not only disputed all of the legal and factual contentions in the document. It also demanded that the FCC withdraw the citation within 30 days.

The FCC did not withdraw. In fact it did a number of follow-ups. By letter dated January 28, 2002, the Dallas Office again explained that the subject devices were CB transmitters and warned Ramko to stop marketing the equipment immediately. But in its response Ramko again disputed the Citation's conclusions and again asked the Dallas Office to withdraw the Citation. In April 2002, Ramko filed a third letter which asserted that in the absence of a response to its February letter, it assumed that the Dallas Office agreed with its position and would withdraw the Citation.

Surprise. Not only did the FCC not withdraw the citation, it continued to let the matter hang fire until July 2005 when it acquired a Ramko flyer which advertised substantially the same equipment that was the subject of the 2001 Citation. Because it appeared to the FCC that Ramko may have continued to market CB transmitting devices as Amateur Radio equipment after receiving the 2001 Citation, on April 17, 2006, the Division issued a First Letter of Inquiry to Ramko concerning these units.

On May 22, 2006, Ramko filed a late response to the Letter of Inquiry. In it, Ramko stated that it neither manufactured nor imported the subject devices. But it also failed to provide responses to questions concerning the length of time it marketed each device, the total number of units sold, and the identity of its retailers and distributors.

Instead, the company argued that it only has a two-year document retention policy and that most documents dated before 2004 have probably already been destroyed. Also, that it was unable to conduct a computerized search for the number of units sold before April 1, 2006, when new computer software was installed and that matching customers to products before then would be limited to the existing paper invoices. It also claimed that it is unable match customers with products under the current computer system. Ramko did concede that it sent out catalogs or price lists which were "substantially similar" to the contents of its web page. Further, Ramko admitted that none of the subject devices received Commission authorization prior to marketing.

On July 20, 2006, the Division issued a Second Letter of Inquiry to Ramko. It once again requested that Ramko provide information concerning certain devices that it was marketing as amateur radio equipment. In view of Ramko's statement that it had a two-year document retention policy, the Division directed Ramko to provide the requested information for the most recent two-year period.

On August 23, 2006, Ramko filed a response. In its response, Ramko provided data on the total number of units sold for certain of the subject devices for the five-month period from April 1, 2006, to August 17, 2006. In answer to a question as to whether the subject devices were capable of operating, or of being modified to operate, on any frequencies beyond the Amateur Radio Service, Ramko stated that "every Amateur radio is capable of being modified to work out of band." Ramko also said that information on how to modify almost every brand of Amateur radio to work out of band is freely available on the Internet."

Subsequently, in September 2006, the FCC observed that Ramko was still advertising several models of 10-meter radios in a flyer on its website. Of these 17 models, 16 models were specifically identified by the FCC in the 2001 Citation as devices that could easily be altered for use as CB devices and therefore could not be lawfully marketed in the United States.

And says the FCC, under Section 503(b)(1)(B) of the Communications Act, any person who is determined by the Commission to have willfully or repeatedly failed to comply with any provision of the Communications Act or any rule, regulation, or order issued by the FCC shall be liable to the United States for a forfeiture penalty. In this

case the FCC has set the amount of Ramko's fine at $150,000.

In simpler terms, this is one of the biggest fines ever issued for what amounts to selling illegal C-B radios under the guise of it being ham radio gear. It also may be a sign of things to come to others who sell the same type of easy to convert to 11 meter pseudo ham radio gear.

For the amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, reporting.

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In case you are wondering, the radio gear in question carry brand names like Conex, Magnum, General models Jackson and Lee and Galaxy. Ramko was given the usual amount of time to pay the fine or to file an appeal. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: UNLICENSED BROADCASTER ORDERED TO PAY $10000

Another unlicensed broadcaster has been dinged for $10,000 by the FCC. This time the recipient of the order to pay is Junior Lahens Charles of Tampa, Florida.

The FCC says that Charles failed to respond to a Notice of Monetary Forfeiture issued to him on February 2nd for operation of an unlicensed radio transmitter. As a result of his ignoring the FCC and based on the information the FCC has before it, the agency has ordered Charles to pay the full within 30 days of the orders April 2nd release. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: FCC ACCEPTS HAM LICENSE TICKET FOR CANCELLATION

The FCC has accepted for cancellation the Technician ticket of a licensee. One who has been the target of inquiries and warnings from the Commission's Enforcement Bureau dating back to 2005. Amateur Radio Newsline's Paul Vinoski, KR8ZZY, has the rest of the story:

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The ARRL Letter says that the FCC's Special Counsel Riley Hollingsworth wrote Brandon Duke, KC0UWS, on March 6th. This, to confirm receipt of Duke's Amateur Radio license for cancellation.

Past FCC communications to Duke have cited information before the commission as well as Duke's own admission to indicate he had been operating on 10 and 20 meter frequencies not

available to him as a Technician class
licensee. Also in the past Hollingsworth had
taken Duke to task for allegedly ignoring
requests to stop using certain repeaters in his area.

Back in 2006, an apologetic Duke had pledged in a
letter to Hollingsworth to change his on-the-air
behavior, noting that he'd destroyed an audio CD
containing apparently objectionable material he'd
been accused of airing. He also said he'd
refrain from jamming, interfering and even using any repeaters.

In January of this year Hollingswotrth sent Duke
a "last warning." It was mailed to Duke at a
Colorado address, but came back as undeliverable.
At the time of the license cancellation letter
Duke had a Minnesota address on file with the FCC

For the amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Paul Vinoski, KR8ZZY

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Duke applied for W0BMD last fall. In his letter,
Hollingswoth noted that his office had forwarded
Duke's license to the Wireless Telecommunications
Bureau for cancellation and for dismissal of his
application for a vanity call sign. (ARRL, FCC)

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THE BPL FIGHT: VK HAMS RELEASE SECOND BPL INTERFERENCE VIDEO

Hams down-under have released a second BPL video
on DVD and streaming. One that depicts the
interference potential of Broadband Over Powerline Internet access.

The show is a 4 minute virtual tour of the North
Hobart B-P-L trial area. This is an installation
that has been the scene of complaints back to
telecommunications regulator ACMA. The video
contains commentary about the trial, technology,
issues and background information on BPL. The
interference that can be seen on the S-Meter and
heard in the soundtrack remains for most of the video at S9 and above.

This video is similar to the Mt. Nelson tour but
has one disturbing difference. Its on-line at
http://reast.asn.au/vk7bplwatch.php#bpltours (WIA)

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RADIO RECOGNITION: HAM RADIO WEEK DECLARED IN CONNECTCUT

And Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell has declared
June 17th to the 23rd as Amateur Radio Week in
that state. In the proclamation Governor Rell

noted that the state recognizes and appreciates the diligence of radio amateurs who serve in SKYWARN as weather spotters and the efforts of the many radio amateurs who volunteer their time in crisis situations. The governor also made note that Connecticut is the home of the American Radio Relay League which represents the interests of radio amateurs and also acts to interest young people in the sciences by performing as an educational gateway. (ARRL)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: MENDELSOHN TO SPEAK AT QCWA BANQUET

Former ARRL 1st Vice President Steve Mendelsohn, W2ML, has been tapped as this years speaker at the Quarter Century Wireless Association's Hamvention Banquet. Mendelsohn, who is with the ABC Television Network will talk about the 2003 Superbowl's High Definition TV coverage and the technology that went into making it happen.

The QCWA Hamvention Banquet will be held at Alex's Continental Restaurant in the Dayton suburb of Miamisburg Ohio on Friday, May 18th at 7:30 PM. Advanced reservation required. Send request to Jerry Ragland, WA8BOB, 409 Park Av. Franklin Ohio, 45005. (QCWA)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for todays radio amateur. From the Auckland New Zealand and United States of America, we are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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RADIO BUSINESS: TTI, INC. AND MOUSER ELECTRONICS BOUGHT BY BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY

One of the worlds richest men now owns a company that services the needs of hams who still like to homebrew their own gear. This with word that the Berkshire Hathaway Company headed up by billionaire Warren Buffett has acquired T-T-I Incorporated and its new affiliate Mouser Electronics.

As most listeners are aware, Mouser Electronics, is a component distributor which advertises in most ham radio magazines and is noted as a parts

source in most electronic construction articles. The company ships globally to over 280,000 customers in 170 countries from its 432,000 square foot state-of-the art facility in Mansfield, Texas.

Its new parent company, Berkshire Hathaway is located in Omaha, Nebraska. Its core business is insurance, including property and casualty insurance, reinsurance and specialty nonstandard insurance. According to Wikipedia dot com, Berkshire Hathaway averaged a phenomenal 25%+ annual return to its shareholders for the last 25 years while employing large amounts of capital and minimal debt.

Both TTI and Mousers management will remain in place. This ownership change should be invisible to customers and suppliers.

For more information about Mouser Electronics, please visit www.mouser.com. (VHF Reflector and other published reports)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: ZERO DAY ATTACK ON W.Va. TV STATION

A vulnerability in Microsoft Windows operating system apparently allowed a computer virus to penetrate the computer systems at WSAZ television in Charleston, West Virginia, almost taking the stations news off the air.

It was discovered early Saturday, March 31st just before the 6 a.m. newscast was to go on the air . Information technology personnel at WSAZ believe it was a "zero day attack" that affected some of the station's critical systems including those dealing with the station's graphics, closed captioning, and many other applications that help bring a newscast to air.

The vulnerability was announced on Wednesday, March 28. According to Microsoft, a "hole" in certain versions of Microsoft Windows could allow an attacker to remotely run programs on some computers if the user accesses certain websites that contain malicious code.

A Zero-day attack is described as a targeted time threat that exposes computer application vulnerabilities. Zero-day attacks are considered extremely dangerous because they take advantage of computer security holes for which no solution is currently available.

At airtime, Microsoft has not released a patch to fix this latest vulnerability found in its Windows software. (Science On-Line)

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WORLDBEAT - CUBA: CONGRESS TO SCRUTINIZE RADIO MARTI

In news from around the world, the Miami Herald reports that a congressional committee now led by Representative William Delahunt of Massachusetts plans oversight hearings into Radio and TV Mart. This, amid allegations of mismanagement of taxpayer money.

The Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee will hold the hearings according to the news account. Radio and Television Marti are United States propaganda stations that beam news and other information to communist dominated Cuba. (Published reports)

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WORLDBEAT - ISRAEL: GLOBAL QSL UNVEILED
A pair of Israeli hams have teamed up to create what they call a unique approach to Q-S-L'ing with real cards over the Internet. Called Global QSL, it was developed by Azar Hami, 4X6MI and Paul Gross to permit hams with web access a way to design and send out QSL's to other hams and SWL's. It works like this. First you register with Global QSL. That costs you nothing. Then you download their graphic editing tool to design their own QSL cards and upload their finished work to Global QSL's server. Once the QSL design is in place, users can then upload the QSO information using either the standard ADIF format found in most electronic log programs or, by manually uploading the QSO information. QSL cards are then printed sorted and forwarded to the respective QSL bureaus around the world. More information on Global QSL, how it works and the cost of printing and mail-out is on-line at www.qlobalqsl.com (Global QSL)
**
DX

In D-X, word that DL6UAA, will be active as 3B8MM from Mauritius for the next few weeks. He will operate mostly CW, but will also give SSTV a try. More information including how to QSL is on-line at www.dl6uaa.de/indexa.html

And DL9MWG will be active from Malta as 9H3RT. This, from April 18th through May 11th. Activity will be on HF, mainly CW. QSL this one as directed on the air.

Lastly, PA5CW will be active portable YB9 from Bali from April 25th to the 10th May. QSL direct via his callbook address.

(Various DX sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: WOK TV

And finally this week, another of those stories where necessity is the mother of invention. This one happened down-under in Australia where a new T-V station wanted to get on the air but did bot have the cash on hand for a studio to transmitter link antenna. So instead an engineer turned to a Chinese cooking utensil for a solution. WIA News Anchor Graham Kemp, VK4BB, has the rest of the recipe:

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Ken Jones asked himself "Why pay $20,000 for a commercial link to run your television station when a $10 kitchen wok from the Warehouse is just as effective?"

This is exactly how North Otago's newest television station "45 South"is transmitting its signal from its studio to the top of Cape Wanbrow, in a bid to keep costs down.

45 South volunteer Ken Jones designed the wok transmitter in his spare time last year. Along with friend Murray Bobbette they worked out mathematical equations to prove the curved metal face of a wok would have the same effect as a small satellite dish.

"We have spent a lot of time getting it right -- the first time we installed one we had it up a pole with the handle still on the end of the wok," he said.

"$20,000 for a commercial link was just money we didn't have, so we bought several woks from The Warehouse instead which was convenient and cheap."

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And this story makes us wonder if the station might decide to hold a celebration cook out using the rest of the unused woks. We hope they invite us if they do. (WIA News)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline. Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline, P.O. Box

660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

Two reminders before we go. First about our on-line poll regarding your position on the concept of Regulation by Bandwidth. To take part, take your web browser to www.arnewsline.org. Scroll down and watch for the word "Polls" on the left hand side of the page. Then click on the box that is closest to your view. As soon as you cast your vote you will see the current results.

Also, the nominating season for this years Amateur Radio Newsline Young Ham of the Year Award is now open. Any radio amateur age 18 or younger residing in all 50 United States, plus Puerto Rico and all 13 Canadian Provinces can qualify. Full details and nominating forms are on our special website at www,yhoty.org. Also see the Vertex-Standard sponsored ad on page 8 of the March issue of QST Magazine.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, Im Jim Meachen, ZL2BHF reporting from Auckland, New Zealand, saying 73 and we thank you for listening. Amateur Radio Newsline is Copyright 2007. All rights reserved.